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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004806

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: NATIONAL DIALOGUE COUNCIL MEMBER ON ELECTIONS,
SUNNI OUTREACH, AND BA'ATH PARTY

Classified By: AMBASSADOR KHALILZAD FOR REASONS 1.4
(B) AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY. National Dialogue Council member Mahmoud Mashadani told the Ambassador November 29 that Iraqi Security Forces are preventing campaigning and that terrorists are targeting Tawafoq (consensus) leaders. He called for a national unity government after the election. He also said his coalition is working to get armed Sunni groups and Ba'athists to participate in the political process. He reported on a recent visit of Tawafoq representatives to Tehran where they met with Rafsanjani. END SUMMARY.

PRE-ELECTION ASSESSMENT: ACCEPTABLE, BUT SUFFERING
FROM SECURITY FORCES, TERRORISTS, AND LACK OF FUNDING

2. (C) The Ambassador met November 29 with Mahmoud Mashadani of the National Dialogue Council (one of three parties in the Tawafoq Coalition, the leading Sunni bloc). Although he termed the current pre-election situation "acceptable," Mashadani said Tawafoq members are suffering from the Iraqi Security Forces that are preventing campaigning and from groups (al-Qaida and al-Zarqawi) that are trying to assassinate them. Mashadani asked that the USG tell the GoI to order officers to stop tearing down campaign posters and end raids until after the election.

3. (C) Mashadani said he would be traveling to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to try to secure funding for Tawafoq, but that time is running short.

POST-ELECTION ASSESSMENT: NEED UNITY GOVERNMENT AND
STRONG MINISTRY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

4. (C) Mashadani speculated that the Shia Alliance will receive 70 seats, the Kurdish Alliance 50-55 seats, Tawafoq 40-50 seats, and the Iraqi National List 15-30 seats. He said Tawafoq will be the legitimate leader of the Sunni Community in the Council of Representatives.

5. (C) Mashadani praised the investigation of the Bunker detention facility and related abuses. The Ambassador assured him that the Embassy will continue to pursue this matter and that investigations will happen at other facilities. Mashadani agreed with the assessment that it is crucial that the next government's Minister of Interior not be linked to militia groups. Mashadani said the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) should have executive powers and courts because if human rights are respected then the situation will improve.

6. (C) Mashadani said that "for us to succeed and finish the transitional period," Iraq will need a national unity government. If any one group is excluded, there will be problems. Ministries should be allotted to the electoral blocs according to the percentage received in the election. He said MoHR should go to Tawafoq and MOD to the Kurds (for two years), and expressed his personal preference for Adel Abd' al-Mahdi as Prime Minister.

SECURITY ESSENTIAL

7. (S) Mashadani told the Ambassador that security will remain a problem if proper attention is not paid to it. He said Tawafoq has played an honest mediator role to convince most armed Sunni groups to disarm as the political process continues. The Ambassador encouraged Tawafoq to continue to play this role and said the US would do what it could to support the effort.

8. (S) Mashadani told the Ambassador that he and other Tawafoq representatives had recently returned from

Jordan and Iran, where they met with Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. He said the Tawafog members told Rafsanjani they would do what they could to help calm the Iraqi insurgency, and they urged Rafsanjani to exhort Badr Corps to ratchet down its activities as well. They warned the Iranians that there will be a civil war if the Sunnis are prevented from participating in the elections. Rafsanjani reportedly responded by referring to the January elections and saying that "we did not prevent you, the Americans did."

FUTURE OF BA'ATH PARTY

9. (C) Mashadani produced a statement from the Ba'ath Party that he said had some positive aspects (e.g., belief in democracy) and some negative ones (e.g., allegations that upcoming election results are already pre-cooked and that civil war will result from the increased arming of Shia groups). He said the basic Ba'athist demands have not changed: release all detainees, withdraw Coalition forces, and allow former soldiers back into the armed forces.

10. (C) In response to a question about the future of the now outlawed Ba'ath Party, Mashadani acknowledged that the leadership has made many mistakes. He added that the Tawafog members are trying to contain the Ba'athists and engage them in the political process. This calls for them to move away from old Ba'athist ideas to new national and cultural ideas and to keep the party from being a destructive element. Mashadani emphasized that Tawafog is trying to deal with the Ba'athists but is not "with" them.

KHALILZAD